

SECRET/SENSITIVESECRET/SENSITIVESECRETMEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Participants:

The Secretary
 Under Secretary Sisco
 Ambassador Vance
 Acting Assistant Secretary Mulcahy
 Walt Cutler, AF
 Jerry Bremer (notetaker)

DOS Review
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Subject:

Africa

The Secretary: I really have few instructions to give you -- since I know what I want. I don't really care what AF thinks. I just want you to do what I tell you or there's no sense in your going.

I think we've mishandled Mobutu and the whole area. I have not given too much attention to it, so it's partly my fault. Mobutu looks at the Congo in 1960 and that what we're doing in Angola now where the Communist influence is greater than it was in the Congo in 1960 and he must conclude that we have written off the area. If we're letting Angola go, then in essence we're letting him go. At least I think if he's rational, that's what he's thinking.

Vance: I agree completely. I haven't seen him in a year and a half but I agree.

The Secretary: If you add to that whole situation in Vietnam I don't find what he does incomprehensible. Hinton is not easy to get along with. You should stress first that we consider Zaire one of the two or three key countries in Africa. Two, we consider him one of the two or three key leaders in Africa. Three, we want to cooperate with him. Four, however, we will not be pushed around. He will not win popularity by pushing us. I want no handwringing, all right? Tell him my assessment of Angola. We have been somewhat neglectful, and we would like his judgment of the situation and what can be done, especially to support the non-Neto groups. He and Kaunda would have to take the front row. We'd also be glad to send [] if he'd like to talk to him. It's possible that we can't do it, but get his best judgment and come back and we'll get the President's decision.

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I want no wailing. By the way, thank you very much for skipping your son's wedding. It was a very patriotic thing to do.

Now do you agree with me on what we are trying to do?

Vance: Absolutely.

The Secretary: We slid into this mess. Mobutu I think is a semi-savage, but I'm trying to see it from his point of view. You can say that we gave Roberto \$300,000, but he didn't need money, but strategy. Does Mobutu know strategy?

Vance: He's pretty shrewd -- if he's still rational and not too imperial.

The Secretary: Just let him and me get together (laughter).

Vance: But if he's still rational, that is exactly how he has to read the situation.

The Secretary: Make that point too -- that we won't be pushed. I won't yield on Davis. He must understand that. Davis will not follow Hinton.

Vance: Even a year and a half ago he was lecturing us on Angola.

The Secretary: He was right. His foreign minister was here last summer and I got talked out of it at the time. The strategy of this building is to keep me from making any irrevocable decision. They were content as long as we did nothing. Now I've made a decision, and I will get the Presidential endorsement, though it may be too late.

Vance: I will add that I cannot predict the outcome on this, though I think this will make us fairly pregnant.

The Secretary: In what way?

Vance: To say we're leaning this way and then to say we can't do it may be a problem.

The Secretary: What real choice do we have? If Angola is taken by the Communists, what conclusions can the African leaders draw about the United States. I know the AF bureau says they care about economic aid, but there's no empirical evidence for that. I just don't think African

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leaders really care about aid unless they're about to go bankrupt. They can only conclude that we don't care. Do you disagree, Joe?

Sisco: I'm not sure of the judgment yet that the situation is leaning in the direction of Neto coming out on top.

The Secretary: If not, this should tip it over. I think Neto will take Luanda.

Mulcahy: In effect he's already top dog there.

The Secretary: I confess I didn't focus on it early enough. Mulcahy didn't break his back getting my attention, though.

Mulcahy: We're a minority of two in our bureau.

Cutler: S/P feels very strongly about it.

Sisco: Your judgment then is that hands off leads to Neto winning?

The Secretary: I'm not in favor of the US involving itself, but in favor of it making it possible for Kuanda or Mobutu to.

Mulcahy: The Africans are really schizophrenic on this. They all say they want help for Savimbi but then they always talk about having no outside interference in their affairs.

The Secretary: I'm not sure we should switch to Savimbi. I would like Mobutu's assessment.

Mulcahy: We double our chances I think by throwing a few bones to Savimbi.

Cutler: The resources required to keep Neto out are considerable. We should be showing political support and perhaps arms to both movements.

The Secretary: I'm not sure we should go in to achieve a total victory a la Vietnam. What we are going to do is break the psychological back of the non-Neto people, since they see no US support.

Forget for a moment how important Angola itself may be. I am concerned on the impact on Nyrere, and Kaunda and Mobutu when they see we've done nothing.

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Do it in the way which makes us the least pregnant, but most decisive. Don't dither around and lecture him on reconciliation. He must be puking when he hears that kind of stuff, I know I do. I know it won't come about with reconciliation.

Mulcahy: They will be issuing a communique in Kenya today. That will be the latest so-called reconciliation. Of course it won't last long.

The Secretary: Oh, I'm all for it. We shouldn't break it, but we should not kid ourselves.

Don't push Mobutu. Just tell him we've had a rough year with other preoccupations. We want to know what his analysis is and what he thinks. We could send [] if necessary.

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Cutler: He's there now. []

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The Secretary: Then we could still use him.

Cutler: Well, we have used him in the past.

Vance: He personally may be compromised at this point.

The Secretary: Well, you work it out. Are you leaving tonight? And when are you getting back: I'm leaving on Friday -- will you be back by then?

Vance: Yes, we're leaving tonight. Will you be leaving Friday night?

The Secretary: Yes.

Vance: All right. We'll try to be back Friday morning.

Mulcahy: Hinton should probably come back promptly.

The Secretary: Well, he certainly should not be part of the conversations.

Mulcahy: He wants a few days in Spain.

The Secretary: Of course, he should do that. Tell him that he'll get another post, and that this is no reflection on him. Tell him to calm down.

Well, I'm counting on you two.

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Cutler: I think there's an advantage this time, since the last serious talk we had with the foreign minister was last August and I believe after that he seriously mislead Mobutu thinking we were already committed.

The Secretary: It is important not to give him the idea that he can kick us around and get an emissary who never needs domestic support.

Cutler: One nice thing that might come out of this would be to get the foreign minister out.

Vance: Yes, he's quite a guy -- a product of Lumumba University.

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